IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A method for the dewatering of sludge ~~wherein the sludge~~ comprising

~~is adjusted~~ adjusting the concentration of the sludge to a pumpable concentration by addition of water,

~~is flushed~~ flushing the sludge through a pipeline to a dewatering field,

~~is mixed~~ mixing the sludge with an aqueous solution of a polymeric flocculating agent while ~~it~~ the sludge is being transported,

~~is sedimented~~ allowing the sludge to settle in the dewatering field to form a sediment and partly ~~freed~~ freeing the sludge of supernatant and/or drainage water and then ~~subjected~~ subjecting the sludge to natural evaporative drying,

~~characterized in that~~ wherein the ~~flocculation is achieved with~~ polymeric flocculating agent is a water-soluble, anionic, polymeric flocculating agent.

Claim 2 (Currently Amended): ~~A~~ The method according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the anionic polymeric flocculating agent is formed from anionic ~~and~~ wherein nonionic monomers and acrylic acid, methacrylic acid, itaconic acid, maleic acid, fumaric acid, vinylsulfonic acid, acrylamidoalkanesulfonic acids, vinylphosphonic acid and/or their salts with alkalis, ammonia, (alkyl)amines or alkanolamines or mixtures of these monomers are used as the anionic monomers[[,]] and ~~in that~~ wherein acrylamide, methacrylamide, acrylonitrile, hydroxyalkyl esters of acrylic and methacrylic acid, vinylpyrrolidone or vinylacetamide or mixtures of these monomers are used as the nonionic monomers.

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): ~~A~~ The method according to claim 1, ~~and 2, characterized in that~~ wherein a polyacrylamide formed from polymerized acrylamide and acrylic acid units is used as the polymeric flocculating agent.

Claim 4 (Currently Amended): ~~A~~ The method according to claim 1, ~~to 3, characterized in that~~ wherein the polymeric flocculating agent contains 1 to 40 wt% of integrally polymerized anionic monomer constituents.

Claim 5 (Currently Amended): ~~A~~ The method according to claim 1, ~~to 4, characterized in that~~ wherein the polymeric flocculating agents have a weight-average molecular weight Mw of higher than 1.0×10^7.

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): ~~A~~ The method according to claim 1, ~~to 5, characterized in that~~ wherein at least two different anionic flocculating agents are used.

Claim 7 (Currently Amended): ~~A~~ The method according to claim 1, ~~to 6, characterized in that~~ wherein the polymeric flocculating agent is added in a proportion of 0.02 wt% to 2 wt% relative to the solids content of the sludge.

Claim 8 (Currently Amended): ~~A~~ The method according to claim 1, ~~to 7, characterized in that~~ wherein the polymeric flocculating agent is used in the form of an aqueous solution with a concentration of lower than 2 wt%.

Claim 9 (Currently Amended): ~~A~~ The method according to claim 8, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the polymer solution is prepared from a powdery polymer.

Claim 10 (Currently Amended): ~~A~~ The method according to claim 1, ~~to 9, characterized in that~~ wherein the sludge to be treated was obtained from rivers, harbors, the sea floor or sandbanks.

Claim 11 (Currently Amended): ~~A~~ The method according to claim 1, ~~to 10, characterized in that~~ wherein the sludge to be dewatered contains at least 50 wt% of fine particles in the size range of 0.06 mm or smaller.

Claim 12 (Currently Amended): ~~A~~ The method according to claim 1, ~~to 11, characterized in that~~ wherein the sludge to be dewatered is adjusted to a density of 1.04 to 1.15 metric tons per m^3 by addition of water.

Claim 13 (Currently Amended): ~~A~~ The method according to claim 1, ~~to 12, characterized in that~~ wherein the flocculating agent is metered into the pipeline over a section between the outlet to the dewatering field and 150 m ahead of the outlet.

Claim 14 (Currently Amended): ~~A~~ The method according to claim 1, ~~to 13, characterized in that~~ wherein a measuring device in the pipeline determines the sludge concentration, calculates the quantity of flocculating agent therefrom and initiates metering of the flocculating-agent solution.

Claim 15 (Currently Amended): ~~A~~ The method according to claim 1, ~~to 14, characterized in that~~ wherein the sludge treated with the flocculating agent has a density of 1.25 to 1.35 metric tons per m^3 after dewatering and before natural evaporative drying.

Claim 16 (Currently Amended): ~~A~~ The method according to claim 1, ~~to 15, characterized in that~~ wherein the natural evaporative drying is accelerated by mechanically turning the sludge.

Claim 17 (Currently Amended): ~~A~~ The method according to claim 16, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the mechanical turning is achieved by means of rotary hoes.

Claim 18 (Currently Amended): ~~A~~ The method according to claim 1, ~~to 17, characterized in that~~ wherein the evaporative drying of the sludge is continued to a density of at least 1.45 metric tons per m^3.

Claim 19 (Currently Amended): ~~A~~ The method according to claim 18, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the sludge has a vane shear strength of greater than 25 kN/m^2.

Claim 20 (Currently Amended): ~~A~~ The method according to claim 1, ~~to 19, characterized in that~~ wherein the dewatered and dried sludge is mixed with clays and/or slaked lime and/or cement in proportions of 1 to 15 wt% each.

Claim 21 (Currently Amended): A dewatered ~~Dewatered~~ sludge prepared according to ~~one of claims 1 to 20~~ the method as claimed in Claim 1.

Claim 22 (Currently Amended): ~~The use of the dewatered sludge according to claim 1 to 21 as~~ A building material comprising the dewatered sludge prepared according to the method as claimed in Claim 1.